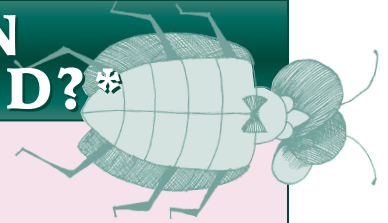


ACTIVITY 4 GRADES 6-12

IS OUR SCHOOL IN LOOSESTRIFE LAND?*



Objective

→ Students will locate and map the area where they attend school, showing any presence of purple loosestrife. (Students can map other invasive wetland plants if no purple loosestrife occurs in your area.)

Time Requirement

1 initial class period and later time to review homework.

Wisconsin Model Environmental Education and Science Standards

Environmental Education: A.4.1, A.4.2, A.8.4, C.8.2, E.12.3.
Science: C.8.8.

DESCRIPTION

Students locate stands of purple loosestrife near their school.

PROBLEM

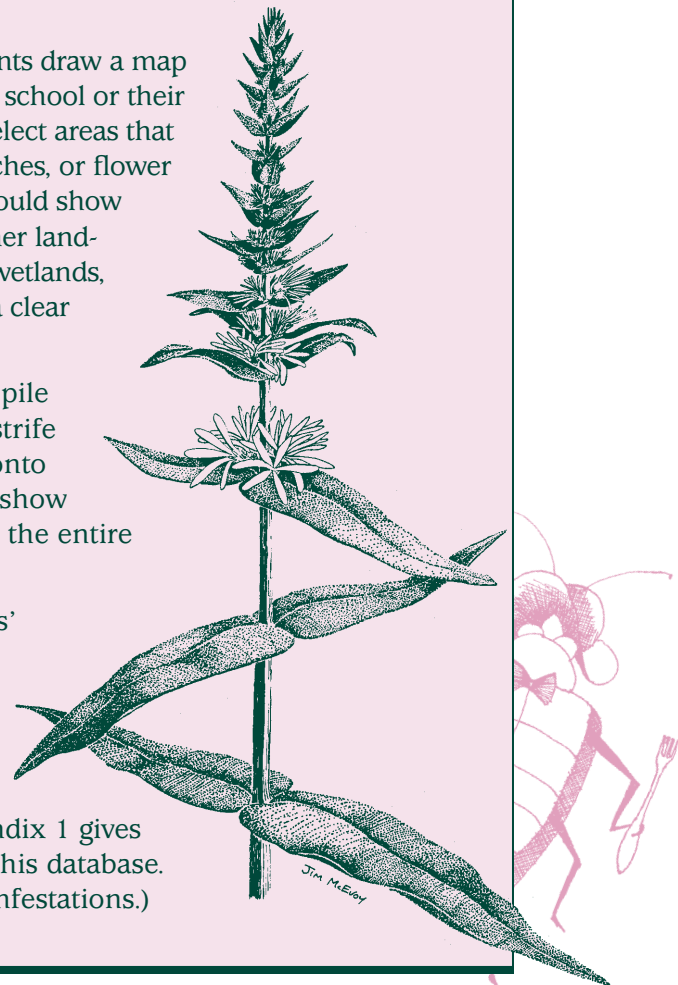
Is purple loosestrife a problem in our area?

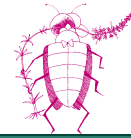
MATERIALS

- ☐ Drafting supplies: rulers, pens, pencils, drawing paper.
- ☐ Local area maps, drawn to different scales. County plat maps, U.S.G.S. topographic maps, and the *Wisconsin Atlas and Gazetteer* (Yarmouth, Maine: DeLorme Publishing) are recommended. You can produce custom maps from the DNR's on-line mapping site (<http://gomapout.dnr.state.wi.us/dnrwebview/>)
- ☐ Pictures of purple loosestrife and other look-alike plants.

PROCEDURES

1. Have each pair of students draw a map of a small area near the school or their homes, taking care to select areas that have wetlands, road ditches, or flower gardens. Their maps should show roads, buildings and other landmarks, waterways and wetlands, purple loosestrife, and a clear scale and legend.
2. Have the students compile all of the purple loosestrife data from their maps onto at least two maps that show the collective area that the entire class surveyed.
3. Compare your students' results with the data that are posted on the map that you can view at <http://www.glifwc-maps.org> (Note: Appendix 1 gives instructions for using this database. Please report all new infestations.)





Activity 4. IS OUR SCHOOL IN LOOSESTRIFE LAND?



Purple loosestrife often can be found near our homes and schools. Mapping the location of loosestrife raises awareness of this invasive plant.

4. Assign the students to contact the landowners in places where purple loosestrife is growing on their property. Have them provide landowners with information about this invasive exotic species. **Note:** Use caution regarding asking young students to contact landowners regarding their land.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Appendix 1 contains a map of Wisconsin from a mid-1980s purple loosestrife survey. This map provides a general idea about where purple loosestrife is the most serious problem in the state. The appendix also includes instructions on how to access a website that identifies most known purple loosestrife locations in the state. Many purple loosestrife sites remain unknown, but these resources show how ubiquitous the plant is around Wisconsin.

It is critical that someone in every area learn about where the plant is invading wetlands. That's a project you and students can undertake that would be both a great exercise in mapping and useful in local management. In fact, any sites you locate can and should be added to the website database. Knowing about your sites also lays groundwork for local control efforts, which you can begin by rearing and releasing biological control beetles with your students.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Evaluate the students' drawings by making sure that each map has a clear scale and legend that includes each type of feature shown on the map. Evaluate each drawings accuracy by comparing it to the professional maps that the class uses.

Have students use the scales on the different maps to estimate how far away from the school or their homes purple loosestrife is growing.

* Revised with permission from "Is Purple Loosestrife a Problem Near Our School?" in *The Purple Loosestrife Project Cooperator's Handbook*.